



## Dateline Dakar

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### Communities draw up management plans, boost sustainable forest growth

Taking charge of their own natural resources, communities surrounding three Senegalese forests have finalized management plans with the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) that will help local residents reap far greater financial benefit while protecting the environment.

On January 11, the Rural Council of Missirah in the southern Tambacounda region approved a forest management plan for the 18,000-hectare community forest of Sita Niaoulé.

It was the third management plan to be finalized with the assistance of USAID's Agriculture and Natural Resources Management Project (USAID/Wula Nafaa) in a month. The Community Forest of Sare Bidji (19,807 hectares) in the neighboring Kolda Region was approved on January 4, and the plan for the community forest of Koulor (39,214 hectares) in Tambacounda Region was approved on December 24, 2007.

"The approval of community forest management plans represents a major breakthrough for the conservation and management of remaining natural forests in Senegal," said Peter Trenchard, Director of USAID/Senegal's Economic Growth



USAID Mission Director Kevin J. Mullally (right), helps charcoal producers in the village of Sita Niaoulé ignite their furnace. Cutting of trees is organized in managed plots in a sustainable fashion so that the forest rejuvenates every eight years. Photo by Richard Nyberg, USAID

Office responsible for environmental issues. "Local residents are now in a much better position to profit from their forest products in a responsible manner."

Under a forestry code passed in 1998 and a decentralization law of 1996 transferring power to local communities, rural Senegalese may participate in the planning and implementation of forest management plans.

Apart from the ecological benefits of preserving natural forests, local communities are setting up forest-based businesses that generate revenues from the sustainable harvesting of forest products, such as charcoal, baobab fruit, and karaya gum.

Assisted by the USAID/Wula Nafaa team based in Tambacounda, local marketing groups are organized, trained in basic business management, given access to credit, and enabled to export their products directly to Dakar or other markets.

To date, total revenues for charcoal alone are close to 40 million F CFA (\$91,000) generated from the three forests in a relatively short period of time. This is a major change from the past when local producers were under the control of itinerant middlemen. In the case of charcoal, local producers are now earning two to three times more for a 50-kg sack of charcoal than they were when working for the middlemen.

"I have produced charcoal for 18 years and never earned enough to buy a single donkey," said Samba Diallo, president of the Union of Charcoal Producers in Missirah. "But over the past seven months we have worked for ourselves and mastered charcoal production and distribution sector thanks to the support of the Forestry Department, the Rural Council, and the USAID/Wula Nafaa project."



Women and children of Sita Niaoulé benefit directly from the carefully managed forest that surrounds their homes. USAID's agriculture and natural resource management program helped charcoal producers in this community make greater profit from natural resources while keeping more profits at home. Photo by Richard Nyberg, USAID



*Rougiatou Diallo settles down for a nap with her two children, Serigne Fallou and Mame Cor in Guédiawaye near Dakar. Photo by Richard Nyberg, USAID*

## Senegal strings up, treats nearly 615,000 PMI bednets

The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) has used several different distribution methods to get 614,977 insecticide-treated mosquito nets over the beds of the Senegalese people. PMI targets people physically most vulnerable to malaria: pregnant women, young children, and people living with HIV/AIDS. To date, PMI in Senegal has delivered — through a vitamin A campaign, a visit from First Lady Laura Bush, boat trips, and AIDS patient networks — 196,872 long-lasting nets into the hands of Senegalese in these three groups, at no charge to them.

Pregnant women and young children took home another 134,413 nets after they contributed a small co-payment for a net in one of 24 districts where a voucher system has begun operating with PMI's help and funds. PMI also teamed up with community organizations to help families re-treat 125,632 older mosquito nets with insecticide.

And for those Senegalese who prefer to shop around for their choice of bednet, or the convenience of popping into a pharmacy at any hour and picking up a net at market price, PMI partners have helped introduce and market new net brands to retail outlets, with a resulting 158,060 nets sold retail.

One beneficiary is Rougiatou Diallo, a 38-year-old mother of two, who lives in the Guédiawaye district near Dakar. She received a net when she took her children to participate in a combined micronutrient-bednet campaign in May 2007. She was so pleased about the free net that “came from the Americans” that her family went out to buy a second at the nearby health center. The two nets protect Rougiatou and six children living in her compound from malaria. Seven months after receiving the net, she reports that no one in the family has fallen ill with malaria and mosquitoes do not venture into their bedrooms anymore. And if they do, she says, they are found dead on the floor the next morning.

## One-third of Senegalese farmers aware of avian flu: USAID study

Only 35% of Senegalese farmers have heard of avian influenza, according to results from a USAID-funded study released on February 27. The study, which is part of a \$400,000 project financed by USAID and implemented by CRS and its partners, also found that only 26% of the 74,000 farmers interviewed had vaccinated against avian diseases. A more disturbing fact is that 50% of farmers do not have chicken coops. The lack of coops could pose a problem if an avian flu outbreak occurred, as it would be difficult to contain the birds. Chicken account for more than 98% of the poultry sold in Senegal. Although there is no reported incidence of bird flu in Senegal yet, contamination poses an immediate threat to the country. Senegal's national parks attract an average of 1 million migratory birds from Asia and Europe every year. The virus is moving closer, though, as the West African countries of Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo experienced outbreaks in 2007.

## Mission launches nationwide USAID visibility poll in Senegal

The USAID Mission in Senegal has launched a nationwide public opinion poll on USAID visibility to determine the extent to which U.S. government development assistance is recognized around the country. On February 23, enumerators took to city streets and village compounds to conduct the poll, which will be used to more clearly define the Mission's evolving communications strategy. A final report detailing results by region is expected on April 7.

## USAID's Peace Education program in Casamance schools reaches 18,000

More than 18,000 students attending 40 middle schools in Senegal's Casamance region have participated in activities during an 18-month pilot phase of a peace education project funded by USAID. The program trained 600 teachers and principals in a peace education curriculum to help instill a culture of peace after two decades of a low-lying civil conflict. The USAID has recently extended the program for an additional two years to bring the message and training to additional middle schools in the south.

In January, approximately 160 schoolteachers from the Department of Ziguinchor attended a three-day seminar on peace education sponsored by USAID through its implementing partner, World Education. The seminar helped teachers assume their role in consolidating peace in the region where separatist forces have waged a low-level armed campaign for over 24 years. Through this activity, USAID aims to reach some 1,200 teachers from 90 high schools of the region.

Read more about USAID/Senegal: [senegal.usaid.gov](http://senegal.usaid.gov)